

KILL ~~THE~~ BILL

DAY OF ACTION
CAN BE A SHOW OF
DEFIANCE >>PAGE 20
HOW WORKERS KILLED
THE BILL IN 1971
>>PAGES 14&15



SECTARIAN RIOTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

British imperialism sowed the seeds
of division >>Page 8

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2750 | 14 - 20 April 2021 | socialistworker.co.uk



TORIES FAWN OVER RACIST DUKE, CAMERON'S SNOUT IN TROUGH

PISS OFF PARASITES



Your antidote to the royalist fever >>Pages 3, 4&5

CORONAVIRUS

Bosses reopen while global infections soar

GLOBAL coronavirus cases have escalated over the past seven weeks.

Vaccination programmes aren't enough to contain the virus. Governments must pour money into health programmes, and functioning test and trace schemes.

But while they put profit first, that won't happen.

>>Page 5

SCANDAL



Greensill case reveals truth of corrupt system

REVELATIONS about former prime minister David Cameron have lifted the lid on how money and influence shapes governments.

A revolving door between ministers and firms helps the rich hold onto cash.

Democracy and accountability are strictly prohibited.

>>Page 7

ELECTION

Hartlepool—why the Labour Party is in trouble

IN YEARS gone by the Labour Party could take votes in the north east of England for granted.

Now, Hartlepool could soon have a Tory MP for the first time in almost 60 years.

People living there told Socialist Worker why that is.

>>Pages 10&11



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'I have pushed the team to explore an alternative with the Bank that might work'

Chancellor **Rishi Sunak's** reply to David Cameron's lobbying for extra funds for Greensill Capital

'The markets are very much behind us'

Financier **Lex Greensill** in a video to staff three weeks before the firm collapsed

'There will be a moment to deal with the Nadia Whittomes. That's not now, not in an election period'

Former Labour cabinet minister on the next phase of the war on the left. Whittome refused to condemn Bristol Kill The Bill protesters

'The data shows we are NOT in a pandemic. If people were dropping dead in the street we would notice and not go to M&S'

Tory peer **Helena Morrissey**, City financier and non-executive director at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office



Billionaires cashing in as the pandemic sweeps the world

AMID THE horrors of the pandemic, the collective wealth of the world's billionaires exploded by more than 60 percent last year, from £5.8 trillion to £9.5 trillion.

Forbes magazine's annual list of global billionaires, released last week, reported unprecedented looting by the wealthiest amid poverty for billions.

"Covid-19 brought terrible suffering, economic pain, geopolitical tension—and the greatest acceleration of wealth in human history," Forbes wrote.

Over 85 percent of billionaires are much wealthier today than they were a year ago.

A new billionaire emerged every 17 hours on average over the past year, Forbes found. The total is now 2,755, an increase of 660.

Britain's number of billionaires rose from 45 to 56. Jim Ratcliffe, the boss of Ineos, comes in at number 113 on the list with an estimated wealth of £12.3 billion.

Amazon founder and outgoing chief

executive Jeff Bezos, whose estimated wealth tops £128 billion, is once again at the top of the list. He is followed by Tesla chief executive Elon Musk, whose haul is £109 billion.

Bezos' wealth is the equivalent of the entire production in a year of a medium-sized country such as Bulgaria or Sudan.

The top two billionaires were not simply passive observers. They took action during the pandemic to keep their wealth booming.

In May last year Musk announced his Tesla northern California factory would reopen in defiance of a local public health order designed to slow the spread of coronavirus.

"Tesla is restarting production today against Alameda County rules," the billionaire tweeted.

Subsequently over 400 workers were infected with Covid-19.

Musk denounced stay at home orders as "fascist".

Amazon admitted last November that nearly 20,000 of its employees

had tested positive since the start of the pandemic. The number of deaths is unknown.

The US has the most billionaires on the list, with 724. China has 698.

Millions died while a tiny few have grasped unimaginable wealth.

EMILY CUNNINGHAM and Maren Costa wanted to change Amazon for the better. The two employees were members of Amazon Employees for Climate Justice—a group pushing the corporation with a growing carbon footprint to do more about climate change. They were sacked in April 2020. Now the US National Labor Relations Board has determined that those firings were part of an illegal retaliation campaign carried out by Amazon to silence workers critical of its business practices.



Cunningham and Costa

ON CURRENT plans, Britain's state pension age will rise from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028.

But data published last week shows men and women in the most deprived areas of England can only expect to live in "good" health until 52.3 and 51.4 years in respectively.

This compares to 70.7 and 71.2 years in the least deprived areas. The poorest will be forced to work while sick.

Deadly chemicals buried across Wales

TOXIC WASTE including mustard gas is buried among more than 1,500 disused landfill sites across Wales.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) data reveals hundreds of the sites contain hazardous waste and only a few dozen are protectively lined.

Its data showed landfill lies beneath homes, leisure centres, hospitals, parkland and alongside rivers.

At Rhydymwyn, Flintshire, the Ministry of Defence was part of Britain's atomic bomb project. The NRW data reports, "Mustard gas, other warfare chemicals".

A tip used by the

agro-chemical company Monsanto, at Llwyneinion, near Wrexham, holds "toxic waste".

It also tipped at Rhosymedre Quarry and near Penycae, Powys, where "unknown" chemical waste was dumped. At Greenwood Old Quarry near Wenvoe, Vale of Glamorgan, is "asbestos, toxic waste".

At Trecwn, Pembrokeshire, where there is a decommissioned Royal Navy depot, the data described a "munitions destruction and phosphorous burning area".

At Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan, "asbestos contaminated soils" lie near the Wales Coast Path.

Ex Serco bosses facing fraud allegations

FORMER BOSSES at outsourcing Serco—infamous for its test and trace failures—face charges over concealing profits the company was making.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has accused former directors of defrauding the government in relation to its lucrative contract for the electronic tagging of offenders. It claims managers confected fake charges in order to conceal profits worth some £12 million.

The SFO alleges that directors devised a scheme in which Geografix, a Serco unit

that manufactured and leased prisoner tagging equipment, would levy £500,000 a month in "completely fictitious" charges to Serco itself.

The alleged aim was to keep Serco's profit margin low and avoid raising questions about whether it was delivering value for money to the ministry.

Union leaders met with the blacklisting ministers

RIGHT WING Labour MP John Spellar has some tough questions to answer.

Lawyer Imran Khan, acting on behalf of the Blacklist Support Group, has written to the former minister in the Tony Blair government.

At issue is potential involvement in secret meetings between Tories and trade union leaders to keep workplace militants out of jobs.

Lord Norman Tebbit, an attack dog for the Margaret Thatcher government in the 1980s, told a parliamentary meeting recently that such meetings took place during his time as employment secretary.

He claimed that the meetings were held to discuss how to deal with "left wing" members of the union.

In an interview for The Times newspaper he added, "I got briefings from Special Branch on what some of the hard-left, communist-style leaders were up to, yes. But I got far more briefings from my friends who were trade union leaders."

Employment

He described secret audiences with people in the electricians' EETPU union. Tebbit said, "Friends of mine who were trade union leaders would come to see me at the department of employment."

"They would drive, be admitted straight into the underground car park and take the lift straight to my office, so that nobody would know that they had seen me."

Before entering parliament, John Spellar was the EETPU's political officer from 1969 to 1992.

It included a spell in the 1980s when the union was expelled from the TUC union federation.

The Blacklist Support Group represents construction workers who were blacklisted for their union activities by major building contractors—including many members of the EETPU.

Dozens of the unlawful blacklist files include the entry "EETPU says NO".

Khan has asked Spellar what he knows about meetings with Tebbit, whether he took part, and whether he knows of any records of them.

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Rulers use parasite death to push 'national unity'

by SAM ORD

THE PAST few days have shown that the monarchy matters for Britain's rulers. They see it as a useful way to push the idea of national unity.

The ruling class is hoping prince Philip's death will be a distraction from the terrible toll of coronavirus deaths, widespread unemployment and cuts.

The media and the politicians alike prefer to pretend that everyone is taking part in shared sorrow.

After a royal death the media all race to produce special supplements and acres of coverage.

Suddenly billboards shift to being a celebration of the life of a racist parasite.

Even what passes for democracy was suspended. As an eight-day period of mourning was announced, political parties suspended campaigning for next month's elections "out of respect".

It's not just the Tories who go along with all this. The Labour Party also refuses to question the monarchy.

Labour leader Keir Starmer left no sycophancy unused as he tweeted, "The United Kingdom has lost an extraordinary public servant in prince Philip. Prince Philip dedicated his life to our country."

He didn't, and Starmer probably knows that. But these statements have allowed him to pass a crucial test for the ruling class. And signals he's prepared to play along with their games.

Despite being used to attempt to unite the country the royal family is a fragile asset for those in power.

You wouldn't know it from the coverage, but an opinion poll last October showed that only two thirds of people in Britain preferred a monarch to an elected head of state.

Funerals and other royal events can be used to try to impose a sense of unity

Signs appeared everywhere

That means many millions of people don't support the royals and have not taken part in mass mourning that the media and politicians expect from us.

That doesn't mean those at the top will grudgingly accept an end to the royals.

Instead, they seek every opportunity to strengthen them.

Prince Philip's death will be a chance for our rulers to reassert the royal myths.

When the Covid-19 pandemic reached Britain, queen Elizabeth urged us to "work as one" and prince Harry and Meghan Markle said,

"we're all in this together." This is laughable when the royals can get helicopters to relocate them to the safety of Windsor Palace.

The royals also hold onto immense riches.

The queen has an estimated personal wealth of over £1.15 billion.

The royals are much more than just a harmless relic, they are a useful tool for the ruling class to justify their dominance.

On other pages...

Dead, racist prince was dead racist
>>Pages 4&5

Whose deaths are marked?

THE CEREMONY and commemoration for prince Philip contrasts sharply with the lack of serious commemoration of those who have died from the coronavirus.

The government figures say that 127,000 have died from Covid-19, although the real figure will probably be higher.

The pandemic's victims were given a minute's silence on the anniversary of lockdown this year.

Last year it took pressure from below to make the government support a minute's silence to remember

workers who had died from coronavirus. There won't be special programmes or press coverage for the vast majority of those whose lives have been lost—many because of the failures of the Tories.

Looking back at the last year, there will be many people who think of the cover-ups, corruption and recklessness that contributed to the deaths of their family members and their friends.

And, they will rightly be sickened by the way that a racist like prince Philip is being celebrated and remembered.

A Covid-19 memorial

Royals aren't popular with everyone

THE BBC and ITV's viewing figures plummeted following a broadcast reschedule to feature back to back coverage of prince Philip's death.

On Friday night ITV viewing figures dropped 60 percent and BBC 2's figures by 64 percent.

The BBC received so many complaints it was forced to launch a dedicated web page to receive them all. The web page was subsequently pulled, restricting the number of complaints.

The broadcaster returned to regular programmes 24 hours after the announcement of Phillips' death.

Despite extensive coverage, Channel 4 came under fire from the Murdoch press claiming they didn't give enough air time to cover the death.

The media have pushed the idea that the royal family are something to be proud of as they bring us together. But this has been rejected by a significant amount of Britain's population.

It appears that reality TV is more popular than the royals with TV commentary show, Gogglebox receiving 1.8 million more views than the BBC's two-hour Philip documentary.

Many people do not go along with the fawning and imposition of what is supposed to be national mourning.

The UVW union that organises primarily low paid workers rightly said that when told prince Philip had died, the response from 90 percent of its members was "who's that"?

The TUC union federation was wrong to tweet, "The UK's trade union movement sends our condolences to the queen and the royal family on the death of the duke of Edinburgh."

Many of its members don't share that mood.

FIGURE IT OUT

£82.4m

The amount of money the royals got in 2019-2020

£13m

was given to the royals just to service Buckingham Palace

£190m

cost for a new yacht in memory of prince Philip

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How the dead, racist prince was a dead racist prince

by ISABEL RINGROSE

PRINCE PHILIP, the racist royal, finally snuffed it after 99 years of snobbery. In line with his wishes for “minimal fuss” there were only to be eight days of official mourning.

The media loved Philip for his “famous quips”, “wit” and “gaffes”, with the BBC once saying he had an “outspoken nature”.

In reality this amounted to a slew of racist bilge.

On a state visit to China in 1986, Philip told a group of British students from Xi'an's North West University, “If you stay here much longer, you'll go slit-eyed.”

And while at a factory near Edinburgh he said a fuse box “looks as though it was put in by an Indian”.

At a Buckingham Palace reception of 400 influential British Indians, he told chef Atul Patel, “There's a lot of your family in tonight.”

Empire

Insulting people from Britain's former empire was a pastime for Philip.

He said to a group of Aboriginals on a visit to Australia in 2002, “Do you still throw spears at each other?”

And he told the Nigerian president, who was dressed in traditional robes, “You look like you're ready

for bed.” He even asked Tory peer Baron Taylor of Warwick, “What exotic part of the world do you come from?” The black then MP replied, “Birmingham.”

Disabled people were victims of Philip's insults too.

He said to deaf children at a pop concert in Wales near a steel band, “If you are near there, no wonder you are deaf.” And he asked a wheelchair user at a nursing home if people trip over her.

Philip, who was older than India's independence, was a privileged parasite whose blood-soaked family lives in luxury off the backs of working people.

Nazis

All four of his elder sisters married aristocratic Nazis in the 1930s—and one named her son Adolf.

Philip was born into a life of royalty in June 1921 in Corfu. His father was a prince of both the Greek and Danish royal families while his mother belonged to the royal family of Hesse, in Germany.

The Greek royal family was deposed, and exiled in 1924. After fleeing Greece when he was a baby, he was educated at public schools in France, Germany and Britain.

It's time to question how we can win a state run by ordinary people for ordinary people—not for the racist elite who reign over us.



Philip patronises Aboriginal performers in Australia, 2002

BYE—PHILIP IS gone

What a joke—sexist snob was face of ‘modern’ Royal family

ALONGSIDE BEING a racist, Philip was a notorious sexist.

At the age of 90, he told a 25 year old woman, who was wearing a dress with a zip running down the front, “I would get arrested if I unzipped that dress.”

He asked fashion writer Serena French at a World Wildlife Fund gathering in 1993, “You're not wearing mink knickers, are you?” And he also asked a female Sea Cadet, who said she worked in a nightclub, whether it was a strip club.

Philip labelled MPs with name badges reading “Ms” at Buckingham Palace the “feminist corner”.

Philip's racism, sexism and contempt for ordinary people reflected the prejudices of his class.

From the 1960s, he was part of attempts to “modernise” the royal family to make it seem less distant from society.

This was only to entrench the royals' wealth and privilege—and the hypocrisy shone through.

During an economic squeeze in 1969, Philip whinged on US television that he may have to give up polo.

During the recession 1981, he said, “A few years ago, everybody was saying we must have more leisure, everyone's working too much. Now that everybody's got more leisure time they are complaining they are unemployed.” Despite stepping down from royal life in 2017, Philip still received a parliamentary allowance of £359,000 a year for his “duties”.

And he wasn't shy to complain about the standards he expected. In 1962 he complained about Buckingham Palace food.

“I never see any home cooking—all I get is fancy stuff,” he moaned.

He also tried to convince people in Canada that the monarchy “exists in the interests of the people”.

And he couldn't understand why a broke student he met in 1998 wouldn't “go and live in a hostel to save cash”.

Tory prime minister Boris Johnson said we are in “gratitude for his decades of selfless serving to the country”.

And ever the patriot, Labour leader Keir Starmer said, “The United Kingdom has lost an extraordinary public servant in Prince Philip.”

All we've lost is a royal waste of space who sponged off working class people.

Child rapist Andrew crawls out of his hole

THE DEATH of prince Philip has seen the return of another disgraced royal—paedophile prince Andrew. He was wheeled out to give quotes to news cameras on Sunday.

The Duke of York was removed from the royal spotlight in 2019 after further evidence resurfaced linking him to sex abuser Jeffrey Epstein and his trafficking circle.

Andrew said he didn't regret his relationship with the billionaire paedophile, who he met with at least ten times during their 12-year friendship.

This included the period after Epstein was convicted.

Epstein had up to 13 phone numbers for the queen's second son—despite Andrew's claims he cut contact.

Andrew's underage

victim Virginia Roberts Giuffre claims to have had sex with him “three times, including one orgy”.

She said, “It was horrible and this guy was sweating all over me. I was just like grossed out from it, but I knew I had to keep him happy.”

Andrew's “alibi” for a night he allegedly had sex with Roberts was taking his daughter to Pizza Express in Woking.

But the prince was seen returning to Buckingham Palace in the early hours of the morning. And he secretly met Ghislaine Maxwell, who is facing charges of allegedly helping Epstein recruit and sexually exploit young girls.

This was two weeks after their friend Epstein was placed under investigation by US cops.

Philip's death is providing useful cover to sweep Andrew's crimes under the rug.

Bringing him out to tell sad tales of the queen's “terrible loss” is a calculated move to show him in a better light.

Andrew has been defended by those at the top, including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, who claimed “everyone is human”.

He is the epitome of ruling class corruption. He should be shoved back into the hole he is trying to crawl out of.

Cops allowed crowds to gather

Hypocrisy right to the end

MOURNERS gathered outside Buckingham Palace to pay tribute to Philip over the weekend, laying flowers in silence.

In March a vigil for murdered woman Sarah Everard, allegedly by a Metropolitan Police officer, also saw scenes of people gathering to pay their respects.

But the attitudes of the police, media, and state could not have been more different.

Coverage of people crying was used to bolster the false narrative that Philip was a beloved hero that everyone will miss. The vigil in

Clapham Common was wrecked after police attacked women who had gathered in solidarity after Sarah's death.

Women were hit, pushed, arrested and pinned down because the protest supposedly broke Covid-19 restrictions.

Meanwhile, outside Buckingham Palace the small number of Met cops stood back to let the vigil run.

The state attacks protesters following the death of a woman who was kidnapped and killed while walking home. But it allows proceedings for a vigil to a rich racist.

Philip's funeral—

organised under the government's Operation Forth Bridge—will take place in Windsor next Saturday.

Coronavirus restrictions mean attendance will be limited—but thousands are expected to line the streets despite advice to stay at home.

The reaction of the police to those who come out nonetheless will be another show of who the police act for and protect.

Those on the Kill The Bill protests at the same time should not expect such sympathetic treatment.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

CAPITALISM ALLOWS GLOBAL COVID-19 CASES TO SOAR

GLOBAL coronavirus cases have escalated over the past seven weeks and deaths have risen for the past three weeks. More than 136 million people have been infected, and almost three million have died.

Covid-19 remains a deadly threat that hits the poorest hardest.

Most of the 670 million vaccine doses distributed worldwide went to people in richer countries. Shortages mean some countries can't even begin vaccination campaigns.

The impact is horrific. World Health Organisation (WHO) director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, “Intensive care units in many countries are overflowing and people are dying—and it's totally avoidable.”

Brazil is recording 4,000 deaths a day. Average daily infections in India have passed 130,000.

Yet much of the media in Britain behaves as though the worst has passed. Newspapers hail the vaccine rollout and demand the Tories lift restrictions faster.

A further easing of lockdown restrictions in England on Monday saw shops, pubs and restaurants reopen, along with personal care

services and leisure centres.

The Daily Mail newspaper celebrated with the headline, “‘This must have been what VE Day was like!’: Revellers across England enjoy a taste of freedom as they pack outdoor pubs.”

The same paper will soon condemn people for “packing pubs”. It is already blaming “revellers” who “flocked to parks” over the Easter bank holiday for a rise in cases.

Britain recorded 3,568 new cases on Monday—the highest figure since 1 April. The figures show that vaccination programmes aren't enough to contain the virus.

Some use this to paint the threat as coming from outside. They argue

“**Covid-19 remains a deadly threat that hits the poorest hardest**

that we should vaccinate Britain and then impose harsher border controls. This ignores the fact that the “UK variant” has fuelled a rise in cases across Europe.

Others are more far-sighted. Former Labour prime minister Gordon Brown wants countries to contribute to a fund to support global vaccinations. He said this is not “charity” but “self-interest”.

That's because as the virus spreads, there's more chance of new, vaccine-resistant variants. But Brown's words are a callous reminder of how, under capitalism, some people matter more than others. We need to begin with the potential deaths of millions of the poorest people.

Everyone should have access to vaccines—but we need more than that too. Margaret Harris from the WHO said, “People think vaccination will stop transmission. That is not the case.”

To contain Covid-19, governments must pour money into health programmes, and functioning test and trace schemes. But as long as they put profit before people, that won't happen.

Capitalism fails the vast majority of people. We need to get rid of it.

UNIONS MUST SHIFT NOW

THIS WEEK saw the final sacking of British Gas workers who had refused a 15 percent pay cut and other assaults.

The dispute saw disgusting blackmail tactics being used by a profitable firm that wants to further enrich its shareholders and bosses. It's another indictment of Tory Britain that firms can legally carry through such methods.

How did they get away with it? It wasn't because workers refused to fight. They were scheduled to take their 43rd day of action this

week. But at key moments the GMB union's national leaders preferred negotiations to escalation and watered-down attempts of militancy.

There was verbal support for the strikers from other unions, the TUC union federation and Labour MPs. Even Labour leader Keir Starmer backed them.

Everyone spoke of how ‘fire and rehire’ had to be stopped.

But the bitter truth is that no other union did anything. Even worse, some kept their members

working at British Gas throughout the dispute. Where was the call for mass financial and physical support?

There wasn't a demand for other trade unionists to act in solidarity with 7,000 workers. Tweets of support weren't enough.

Workers have been forced to choose between the sack, leaving the firm, or a deal with much worse pay and conditions.

Workers have to act themselves and push trade union leaders to confront ‘fire and rehire’ or it will become a terrible norm.

Breakfast in



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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Repression is rulers' response to crisis

THE TORY government's Police and Crime Bill is a very nasty attack on civil liberties. But it's not an aberration.

The French Marxist Ugo Palheta wrote recently about the trend to the "authoritarian hardening" of liberal capitalist states.

France under Emmanuel Macron is indeed a good example. Protesters have been subjected to indiscriminate police violence, new repressive laws have been passed, and ministers have been targeting what they absurdly call Islamo-leftism.

But Britain under Boris Johnson is another example.

The Covid-19 pandemic is the first global crisis provoked by capitalism's increasingly destructive relationship with nature. Climate change will create plenty more.

The inevitable consequence will be greater attempts to plan economic and social life. This planning can take democratic forms that lead us to a socialist society, or it can be authoritarian, imposed from above to prop capitalism up.

The pandemic has seen the acceleration of this second kind of planning. States, especially in the rich imperialist centre of the system, have intervened to shut down large sectors of the economy, limit movement, and organise mass vaccinations.

They have spent and borrowed on a huge scale to prevent the lockdowns causing economic collapse. These measures have had some success, though the future depends on the contest between the vaccines and the new variants of the virus.

But these forms of planning remain capitalist. They are designed to preserve the existing system, and their effects maintain and reinforce the inequalities that have become so huge during the neoliberal era.

The starkest example is the impact of Covid-19 on poor people of colour on both sides of the Atlantic. Detailed analyses have shown how in US cities vaccination rates are higher in affluent neighbourhoods than in poor black neighbourhoods where the death rate is higher.

The pandemic has been marked by waves of mass resistance, most notably in the worldwide Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests last summer. This gives states an incentive to increase the level of repression. In Britain ministerial regulations sought to drive protests off the streets.

Debates have been going on for some time within the British state about how to handle protest. In February 2020, Metropolitan police commissioner Cressida Dick demanded more powers to deal with Extinction Rebellion, which she said aimed to "bring policing to its knees".

Watershed

According to the Financial Times newspaper, the BLM demonstration that last June pulled down the statue of the slaver Edward Colston marked a watershed.

It "helped to prompt the home secretary to commission HM Inspectorate of Constabulary—the official police watchdog—to conduct an inquiry into whether police were handling demonstrations sufficiently robustly.

"Supporters of UK police forces' recent, relatively liberal attitude to protest ... insisted the force would have created far more problems if they had tried to intervene in a crowd of 10,000 people to save the statue...

"The Inspectorate's report on March 11 largely endorsed Avon and Somerset Police's careful handling of the statue incident but at the same time shifted the emphasis of advice to police forces in England and Wales about protests.

"It found forces' handling of protests tipped 'too readily in favour of protesters'."

So the Police and Crime Bill doesn't just reflect home secretary Priti Patel's authoritarian instincts. It comes out of a deeper shift in the state.

This is reflected in the Inspectorate of Constabulary's defence of the Met's thuggish handling of the vigil for Sarah Everard in Clapham last month.

The British state is gearing up to mount greater repression. The disgraceful Race Commission report is another sign of this trend. Happily, the Police and Crime Bill has provoked another wave of protests, showing that people aren't prepared to be silenced. But we shouldn't have any illusions.

The Johnson government has been forced into U-turn after U-turn over different issues. But the assaults on democratic rights have steadily continued. They are part of the shift to what has been called "catastrophe capitalism".

We have a long fight ahead of us.

THE PCS union sent a message to bosses last week (top). Pickets during a previous strike at Swansea (below)

Hundreds of civil service workers strike over safety

by NICK CLARK

AS THE Tories push ahead with a dangerous easing of lockdown restrictions, more than 1,000 people at a major government workplace struck last week for safety.

Some 1,400 workers at the Driver, Vehicle and Licensing Agency (DVLA) headquarters in Swansea demanded bosses allow more of them to work remotely.

Their four-day strike between Tuesday and Friday last week, came after more than 600 coronavirus cases were reported at the office in a year.

Strikers say bosses have ignored their pleas for home working.

Striker Sophia told an online rally, "Why have I decided to strike today? It's to do with safety.

Ignore

"I have been working in the contact centre, and to see the DVLA ignore the concerns of its staff is disgusting."

The battle has been brewing since DVLA bosses forced people back to on-site working last year, having initially allowed most to work from home.

It became a major scandal in the national news in January after hundreds of cases were reported. Workers said they sat less than a metre

apart, and that the cleaning regime wasn't adequate. Yet bosses insisted the building was safe.

In talks with the PCS union, they refused to allow most of those in the office to work from home. And they have refused to release a report into home working after contracting the consulting firm Deloitte to write it.

They even said workers were responsible for the outbreaks.

PCS branch chair Sarah Evans told the rally, "We were told that staff non-compliance and active social lives were to blame for positive

cases. We were told they were typically of a younger age in the contact centre and as such they were all out drinking and catching the virus in that way.

"We were dealing with an employer that had no interest in the safety of its staff."

Mac, another striker from the DVLA's contact centre, said, "We were told data protection and IT issues meant we couldn't work from home.

"Data protection and IT issues didn't stop the bosses from working from home.

Bomb

"So when our members are the odd ones out, sitting on a ticking time bomb, we're given loads of excuses. But there is no excuse."

The strikers have had widespread support, with messages of solidarity and the backing of several Labour MPs.

It shows that PCS should be able to beat the DVLA bosses—but they'll need support from across the trade union movement.

Mac said, "The contempt for our members stems from the contempt that the Tory government has for public sector workers.

"We the key workers kept this country running through the pandemic and this is how they repay us.

"It's important that we take action now."

Solidarity poured in

THE PCS says support for the strike grew as it went on.

"More members joined the strike on 7 and 8 April after seeing the success and the outpouring of support from the local community, MPs and other unions," it said.

In a message to last Tuesday's rally one striker said, "I only decided last night that I would go on strike today. I just wanted to keep my head down. "But I'm striking

for safety." DVLA staff who are working from home have also begun a work to rule in support of the strike. The union should immediately follow up the success of the strike and keep up the pressure on DVLA bosses by calling more dates for action.

Donate to the strike fund.
Account name Fighting Fund Levy, account number 20331490, sort code 60-83-01, reference DVLA.
Send solidarity messages to dvla@pcs.org.uk

Greensill revelations show how a corrupt system aids the rich

A revolving door between ministers and private firms helps the rich hold onto their cash—and democracy means little in the networks that shape governments, says **Charlie Kimber**

REVELATIONS ABOUT former Tory prime minister David Cameron have lifted the lid on the networks of money and influence that shape government policy.

Democracy and accountability are strictly prohibited.

When Cameron was prime minister, banker Lex Greensill became an adviser in Downing Street.

When Cameron was no longer prime minister, Greensill hired him as an adviser to his firm Greensill Capital. As this company became desperately short of funds, Cameron intervened to promote it.

He lobbied at least four government ministers on behalf of Greensill—chancellor Rishi Sunak, health secretary Matt Hancock and two Treasury ministers.

The Treasury last year rejected an application from Greensill to access the CCCF Covid emergency loan scheme.

Cameron emailed Boris Johnson's senior special adviser at No 10 within hours of the decision.

He said it was “nuts” to exclude Greensill's company and demanded the government reconsider.

“What we need is for Rishi [Sunak] to have a good look at this and ask officials to find a way of making it work,” Cameron wrote.

Texts released last week show Sunak telling Cameron he had “pushed the team to explore an alternative with the Bank that might work”. There was also a call between the pair.

While access to the CCFF was ultimately rebuffed, Greensill Capital was later accredited to the coronavirus large business interruption loan scheme.

This handed it the ability to access government-backed loans of up to £50 million.

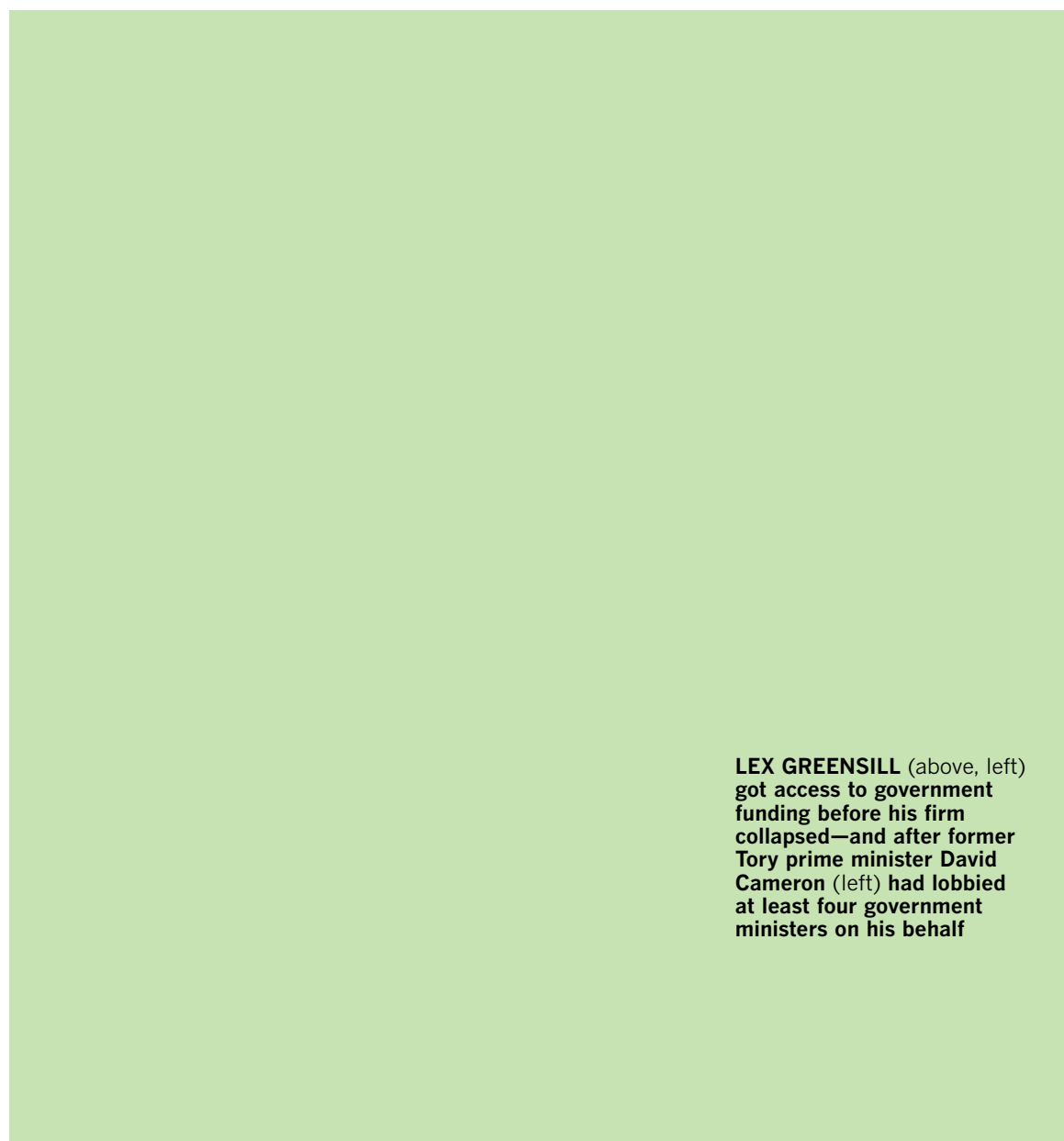
Millions

Cameron held tens of millions of pounds of share options in Greensill. It has since gone bust, threatening 55,000 jobs in the firms it funds.

Loans that Greensill Capital took out and can't repay will now be covered by public funds. Did Cameron know that Greensill was likely to collapse when he was asking for government money?

An investigation by the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists concluded that Cameron's activities did “not fall within the criteria that require registration on the register”.

This does not mean he has been cleared. It just means that he did not have to register his lobbying.



LEX GREENSILL (above, left) got access to government funding before his firm collapsed—and after former Tory prime minister David Cameron (left) had lobbied at least four government ministers on his behalf

Turning NHS pay to profit

DAVID CAMERON pushed for the government to adopt an NHS pay scheme that would ultimately be profitable for Greensill.

The pitch was to pay health workers either daily or weekly, ahead of their usual payday. The company would then claim the money back from the government.

There was no immediate fee, but Greensill planned to make money from the scheme. It was awarded without tender or an open process.

Two senior former employees say the plan was to convert the NHS's future payments into bonds and sell them internationally—at a profit.

Greensill used the prestige of working with the NHS via the service, and a separate pharmacy scheme signed off by Cameron during his time in office, to demonstrate its credibility with investors.

Cameron initially raised the idea of Greensill offering NHS wage payment services with health secretary Matt Hancock at a “private drink” in October 2019. The Sunday Times reported that the firm's founder Lex Greensill also attended the drink, along with Bill Crothers.

Crothers is a former head of government procurement who became a Greensill director.

Greensill also met with Dido Harding, then head of NHS Improvement, and Sir Simon Stevens, the chief executive of the NHS. He later launched a partnership with NHS Shared Business Services, jointly run by Hancock's department, allowing up to 400,000 NHS workers to be paid daily. The scheme, called Earnd, was taken up by some NHS trusts.

One former Earnd employee told the Financial Times newspaper, “The plan was to use public sector contracts as a loss leader. The service would be rolled out to the private sector, with a fee attached.”

Earnd's advisory board included Louise Casey, a former government adviser on homelessness, and David Blunkett, ex-Labour education secretary.

‘We all know how it works’

- 1 David Cameron understood the system shortly before he became prime minister.** “We all know how it works,” he said. “The lunches, the hospitality, the ex-ministers and ex-advisers for hire, helping big business find the right way to get its way.”
- 2 Like all former prime ministers, Cameron claims cash to run his private office.** Latest figures available for 2018-19 show that Cameron took £110,413 for these costs. Tony Blair took £115,000, John Major £114,935.
- 3 Matt Hancock, Rishi Sunak and Boris Johnson will avoid public questioning of their actions.** Conveniently, all broadcast interviews and press conferences have been suspended due to the death of racist royal prince Philip.

Northern Ireland riots sparked by legacy of British imperialism

As loyalist areas of Northern Ireland face unrest, **Simon Basketter** explains why the protests are happening and what they mean for Britain's imperialist interests

A DOUBLE-DECKER bus has been hijacked and set on fire. Young people have hurled petrol bombs at police.

Almost a hundred police have been injured in the worst sectarian violence in Northern Ireland for eight years. Most of the rioters are young people—some as young as 12. Last Saturday was the 23rd anniversary of the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement that officially ended 30 years of conflict, known as “the Troubles”. But unrest and violence has flared up from time to time ever since.

The supposed spark was the decision not to charge the leaders of Sinn Féin for breaking Covid-19 regulations last June by attending the funeral for Bobby Storey. Storey was a former top member of the Irish Republican Army.

Unionists have portrayed this as a sign of political favouritism. But in the same month a “protect our statues” protest was left alone by the police.

Notably there were 70 fines issued to people who attended a socially distanced Black Lives Matter protest.

Memorial

In January the cops broke up a memorial service attended by 30 people who were commemorating the victims of Loyalist assassination at Sean Graham's bookmakers in 1992.

So there are political choices by the police and state on who and when to bully people, but not quite in the way Loyalists portray it.

In contrast Gerry Carroll, a People Before Profit Northern Ireland Assembly member, said, “We believe the way forward is to build working class unity against those conditions of poverty and against the parties who implement them, and then rely on stoking tensions to maintain their voter base.

“We want to see an end to the senseless violence and the beginning of a cross community campaign which fights for working class communities across the divide.”

The Tories' version of Brexit has played an important part in increasing tension.

The Northern Ireland Protocol was a last minute compromise to get Brexit through. It effectively creates a trade border down the Irish Sea—something Boris Johnson said would never happen.

In November 2018, Jonson attended the DUP conference. He said, “We would be damaging the fabric of the Union with regulatory

CONFLICT HAS led to buses, cars and police being attacked

checks and even customs controls between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I have to tell you no British Conservative government could or should sign up to any such arrangement.”

For all the flag waving, the interests of Unionists come low down on the British state's priorities.

An opinion poll in February indicated that the DUP's share of the vote had declined to just 18

percent. Other Unionist parties are likely to garner their votes.

It is in this context that the DUP decided to whip up sectarianism, despite being the people in charge of administration of the new border.

They met with the Loyalist Communities Council, an umbrella group of paramilitaries, to encourage them to mount a campaign against the Irish protocol.

Anti-protocol graffiti appeared followed by marches of masked men.

And away from the riots Loyalist paramilitaries last week ordered the removal of Catholic families from a housing estate in Carrickfergus.

There were attacks on three homes that they believed had Catholics in them. Some of the occupants are understood to have since fled the area.

This is a traditional route for

Unionist parties. First, encourage sectarianism.

Then watch as it escalates to violence. And then call for calm and hope to gain face as the respectable defenders of the union.

The riots are not so much about a funeral or trade tariffs.

Rather they are an expression that the entrenched sectarianism created and nurtured by Britain in Northern Ireland hasn't gone away.

Sectarianism to stabilise

SECTARIAN BIGOTRY is inseparable from the whole Northern Ireland set-up. Ever since Britain's rulers partitioned Ireland a century ago, Northern Ireland has been riven with sectarianism. From the police to the judiciary, in housing, education and employment.

The violence of the Northern Ireland state provoked a quarter of a century of open conflict. By the mid-1990s British governments had realised that they could not defeat the IRA by force.

Britain's rulers wanted to stabilise Northern Ireland. So they pushed Unionist politicians into

accepting that peace talks had to take place—and that Sinn Féin had to be part of the process.

The peace in Northern Ireland is not based on drawing Protestants and Catholics together, but on policing people apart.

The consensus reinforces segregation by insisting that opposed “communities” must be represented by politicians who fight for one group against the other. For instance, everyone elected to the Assembly has to identify themselves as Unionist, Nationalist or Other. The result is managers in Northern Ireland earn 20 percent more than their

counterparts in Britain—while average private sector earnings are 10 percent lower. The number of “peace lines”—a euphemism for segregation walls—and “interface areas”—neighbourhoods where

sectarian tensions and violence are high—has grown since 1998.

Some 90 percent of social housing estates in Northern Ireland are segregated. And the poorer you are, the more likely your estate is to be segregated.

According to academic Kieran Allen, “The median wage of Protestants and Catholics is now exactly equal with workers from both denominations earning an average of £10.58 an hour in 2017.

“However, while there is an equality between Catholics and Protestants within Northern Ireland, it is more a case of equality of poverty.”

Rioters throw petrol bombs

A crisis of capitalism

NICK CLARK'S article Capitalism—Is It More than Greed? (Socialist Worker, 31 March) brilliantly argues that greed is built into capitalism through the bosses' competitive drive for profit.

It also argues that this is both the source of economic development under capitalism and the terrible destruction and misery that it produces.

Some of that destruction comes from the inevitable tendency for the rate of profit to fall.

This occurs because the drive to raise productivity and lower costs forces bosses to invest more on technological development and less on the workers who work that technology.

But the exploitation of workers, paying them less than the value of the goods they produce, is the source of profit. What each capitalist has to do in order to ward off rivals has very bad consequences for the capitalist system as a whole and for us.

We have been in a period of low profitability across the world as a whole over the last 50 years. There will be some economic recovery when lockdown is eased, but it will still be in the context of relatively low profits.

So recovery will be fragile, unemployment will rise and attacks on workers will continue as will the destruction of the environment. That is why we need to end the system of production for profit over need urgently.

Rob Hoveman
West Yorkshire



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Sewell has a long history of disdain for working people

SO-CALLED “educationalist” Tony Sewell fronted the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities’ whitewash of racism last week. Years before that, teachers in Islington, north London, got a taste of his contempt for the rights of working people, whatever their ethnicity.

In 2013, having previously been appointed by then mayor Boris Johnson to chair a London Education Commission, Sewell was chair of governors of a new 16-19 free school.

Staff there were forced on to effectively zero hours contracts, with only seven days a year sick pay and minimum maternity rights.

They joined the NUT union, now

the NEU, and asked for union recognition. They were told the school would only consult members on an “individual basis” and that “there is no further need for the NUT”.

When the teachers voted for escalating strikes to win union recognition they were told, “We are not prepared to recognise you on a voluntary basis and this will remain our decision whether or not industrial action is taken.”

Shortly before the strike was due to begin every teacher was made to attend, alone, a meeting with Sewell.

He looked down on them from a raised platform and tried to bully them in to submission.

Showing great courage and

determination, however, they all refused to answer his questions and told him to speak to their union.

After two days of strikes Sewell and his partners in crime capitulated.

They recognised both the NUT and the GMB unions, and put all our members on national pay and conditions.

Ken Muller

Formerly joint secretary, Islington NUT/NEU

● **BRILLIANT.** A government report that can have sections of the working class fighting with each other as to who gets the worse deal. They’ve been promoting this for years.

Andrew Timothy Price
On Facebook

Chaos in Suez Canal shows up fragile trade

IN HIS analysis of the blocking of the Suez Canal by The Ever Given (Socialist Worker, 31 March) Alex Callinicos refers to a Washington Post piece by professor Laleh Khalili.

The piece was about the increase in the size of cargo ships following the Suez Crisis in 1956 and also the 1967 Israeli war on the Arab states.

Her book, *Sinews of War—Shipping and Capitalism in the Arab Peninsula*, is excellent. It provides analysis and insight into the trade

routes created and followed by the shipping companies which move 90 percent of the world’s goods in vessels, including behemoths such as the Ever Given, in their relentless pursuit of profit.

This incident demonstrates the fragility of that trade.

In her book, Khalili examines the history of resistance by seafarers and port workers.

Read more about it at bit.ly/LalehKhalilireview

Dave Clinch
Devon

Why are we left out of the living wage?

THE GOVERNMENT said last week that it will be increasing the minimum wage by a few pence.

I don’t understand why 16-22 year olds don’t get the national living wage.

We have to pay the same costs of living as everyone else and do the same work as anyone else, so we should be paid equally for that work.

I’ve worked in lots of different kinds of minimum wage jobs since I was 17.

It seems very unfair that a 23 year old can earn £2.35 more per hour than a 20 year old for the exact same work.

As a young person, I



All workers need a living wage—however old they are

already feel disillusioned and disrespected by Westminster, and their inability to address this issue makes me feel even more like they do not take

young people seriously.

I feel this is something that people are not getting angry enough about.

Anna Leeds

Just a thought...

SW not right on the virus

THIS ARTICLE does not get things quite right about the situation regarding the number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths (Lockdown is eased but virus is growing, 5 April).

The situation appears to have improved since three to four months ago.

The lockdown, which the Tories did very belatedly, is a factor.

More importantly, the vaccination programme by NHS staff.

It is possible to point out real improvements without in any way letting the Tories off the hook.

Julie Webster
On Facebook

Pimlico school ready for war?

MY OLD school (Pimlico academy school students revolt over racism, 31 March).

After this “Christian” academy chain took it over a few years ago, I noticed a full metal plate medieval suit of armour in the lobby.

It was still there when one of the pupils was being interviewed on TV this week.

What is a suit of armour doing in school? Is beheading heathens part of the curriculum?

Merlin Reader
On Facebook

Gas workers need support

THE BRITISH Gas workers are being treated atrociously.

Doesn’t the GMB union realise that if they don’t stop fire and rehire, lots more of their members will be attacked too?

Sue Rogers
North London

● **WHERE IS the Labour Party?** Why is it not actively backing the workers?

Carl Walker
On Facebook

Stand up for Travellers

I HEARD a speech at the Norwich Kill the Bill protest.

The speaker said everyone knows someone who thinks Gypsy, Roma, Traveller racism is acceptable.

We must speak to them urgently because this bill is horrific.

Gin Putland
On Facebook

HARTLEPOOL could soon have a Tory MP for the first time in almost 60 years—and no one seems surprised. A poll commissioned by the CWU union and published last week showed that the Tories could win a coming by-election on 6 May.

If the result of the poll was repeated in the election, the Tories would win with 49 percent over Labour's 42 percent.

It would be a huge boost to the Tories. They would tout a win as proof that Labour is losing its former strongholds because working class people want right wing parties.

And the Labour right would join in. They are getting their excuses in early—blaming it all on the legacy of former leader Jeremy Corbyn, and labelling the left's criticism of Keir Starmer as sabotage. They are preparing the ground for a further shift to the right.

But many people in Hartlepool tell a different story.

Stop someone in the street, and they might well tell you that they don't follow politics—but that they do think something needs to change.

No one seems surprised that the Tories might win. And everyone says Hartlepool has been run down and abandoned.

Michael is one of them. "It could be that the Tories will win," he told Socialist Worker. "Things are changing around here in the north east. It used to be Labour for years. But I don't think Labour has got a solid plan anymore."

"They need to do something with the town itself," he explained. "There's a lot of empty shops and empty houses all over the place. I don't think anybody has the town itself at heart."

Darren, a student who grew up in Hartlepool, feels the same. "I probably wouldn't be surprised if the Tories got in, but I'm not really a fan of them," he said. "Nobody does much for the town. They need to invest in the town centre so it's not just charity shops and Greggs."

Investment

Jayne, a Labour Party member in Hartlepool, suggests that feeling is widespread.

"My partner who has lived here all his life says he struggles to see what the Labour councils have achieved," she said.

"That there has been an ongoing deterioration in the town and the services over the last decade at least. He said that he has seen investment in local cities such as Sunderland and Newcastle but nothing in the towns of Teesside.

"I have a friend who has lived in the town the past decade," she added. "She said she has also seen the sad decline of the town."

Jayne said she thought local Labour politicians had struggled to find money to improve Hartlepool. Deeper rooted, longer-running problems of poverty and unemployment underlie the town's decay. "The unemployment rate in



Where once there were nightclubs, pubs and signs of the town's wealth, Hartlepool now has ruins (above) Labour's campaign headquarters is one of the few shopfronts not yet mothballed (left)

Hartlepool is one of the highest in the country and that's always been the case," said Jayne.

In fact, at 8 percent, it is the highest in England. Hartlepool is consistently ranked as one of the most deprived areas in Britain. One third of children there live in poverty. It's the legacy of a major assault on jobs more than 40 years ago.

Hartlepool could symbolise every town or region where jobs were smashed then replaced—if at all—with low paid work in business parks, warehouses and service industries.

In 1977 the state-owned British Steel—then under a Labour government—announced the closure of its steelworks in Hartlepool. At least 1,500 jobs went with it.

Bosses decided that an economic crisis meant steel workers had to pay. A constant squeeze on jobs, pay and living standards—overseen by Tory and Labour governments—meant life for people in Hartlepool never really got better after that.

"Go back to Thatcher," Derek, who used to work at a nearby Nissan car plant, told Socialist Worker. "The loss of the steel works, the loss of the coke works, and we still haven't recovered. We still look backwards at that because there's nothing to look forward to."

"My son lives in Nottingham. He abandoned the area, and I don't blame him—and I think my 16 year old grandson will do the same."

"There's no future here," Derek added, "Yes there are a few factories, there's shops, there's cinemas. But there isn't any industry that's going to stimulate people to come here."

"I drove past the new Amazon warehouse near Consett, in County Durham, the other day. It's an amazing sized building—there's a major road leading in from the A1 trunk road to



Labour party member Jayne says deep-rooted poverty underlies Hartlepool's decay



HARTLE LABOUR IN

In years gone by the Labour Party could take for granted. But, reports Nick Clark, next show just how out of touch the party now

support it. And what sort of jobs are there? You're on low wages and you're stressed because you're under constant pressure."

Amazon is just an example. "There's so many people on zero hours contracts, pitiful wages, poor terms and conditions," said Derek.

Commentators

"There's nothing you can do here on one person's salary. A full time wage is maybe £1,100, £1,200 a month. You show me a family that can live on that."

These problems are different to the reasons that right wing commentators and politicians will give for Labour's falling support.

The Labour right thinks the party needs to talk about patriotism, "security" and support for the army and the police to win back working class



The town symbolises places where good jobs were smashed and replaced with low paid ones



A shuttered food bank in the centre of town mirrors the rest of the shops on the high streets (right) Some shops in the town which were boarded-up in the in 1980s remain the same today (below) Meanwhile the local council is touting the area around Hartlepool's docks as a future 'waterfront development' (left, and bottom)



EPPOOL I TROUBLE

ake the votes in the north east of England
month's Hartlepool by-election could
is with its former heartlands

people. But no one Socialist Worker spoke to in Hartlepool mentioned any of these things.

Instead they talked about jobs and investment, and said if the Tories get in it's because they look like a change.

"Hartlepool could do with a change to be honest with you," said one man who didn't want to give his name. "A Conservative candidate could possibly do the town well.

"It's always been a Labour town, Hartlepool. But the town wants jobs and a future for the kids. There's no future because all the big industry has been shut down."

"Labour has been stale for years and years," said another. "They've promised us things but there's nothing there. Hopefully, Conservatives, independents—we just need a change."

This impression is helped by the



fact that the Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen—a Tory—has taken credit for a proposed new "freeport" in the area.

Freeports are places where bosses are allowed to employ people on worse conditions and pay less taxes. So in reality it will mean more low paid, insecure and dangerous jobs. But it's being pushed—by the Tories and Labour—as the improvement Hartlepool needs.

That's why Mehedi, an asylum seeker from Bangladesh, said if he was entitled to vote it would be for the Tories.

"When I first came here four years ago the experience I had was not good," he said. "But the situation in Hartlepool now is getting better because the mayor now is Conservative. I see a lot of improvement when I see the news about the freeport.

"It looks like there may be a change coming and if I could vote I would vote for a Conservative."

Establishment

The flipside of all this is that, despite ten years of Tory government, Labour looks like the establishment. If people feel Labour has taken them for granted, they're not wrong.

Labour lord Peter Mandelson wrote in the right wing Times newspaper that "Hartlepool is not a town that likes to be taken for granted." He should know, having taken people's support for granted when he was parachuted in as Hartlepool MP under Tony Blair's government.

At the time, Mandelson said Labour could push through the agenda of privatisation and low wages started by Margaret Thatcher without losing support. Working class people "have nowhere else to go," he said.

That impression was reinforced badly when Labour backed calls for a second European Union (EU) referendum ahead of the 2019 general election.

In Hartlepool, the vote to leave the EU was 70 percent—another vote for change. To many people, Labour's turn towards overturning that vote was yet another example of politicians' utter



Labour's share of the vote has fallen in Hartlepool since 2001. Rising only in 2017 under Jeremy Corbyn

contempt for ordinary people. "The Labour Party is the establishment which has done nothing," said Derek.

He's a former Labour member and GMB union activist. But now he thinks he might even spoil his ballot paper rather than vote Labour.

If Labour could show some real opposition, things might be different, he said. "Labour are not an effective opposition at the moment. The last MP Mike Hill was not a vocal MP. He wasn't manning the barricades at any point.

"The current candidate that's been thrust on the Labour Party is pro-Europe. So what we've got now is a perfect storm that could result in Labour losing heavily and the only real alternative is the Conservative Party."

The problem comes from the top, he added. "For some reason the current Conservative Party is held in high esteem. A lot of that is because Keir Starmer and his cronies just haven't offered an effective argument against anything he's done.

"There's so many things they could get stuck into them about—but they're not."

Strong opposition to the Tories would be a start. Yet, as the right point out, with Corbyn as leader in 2019, Labour's share of the vote in Hartlepool fell to 37 percent, with a majority of just 3,500.

They say this is more proof that people didn't support the left wing promises in Labour's manifesto.

In fact, Labour's share of the vote has been falling in Hartlepool since 2001. The only time it has risen was in 2017—the year Corbyn's Labour nearly beat the Tory government with a left wing manifesto and an insurgent campaign.

Polls in 2019 said Corbyn's promises to tax the rich, and to nationalise industry, were still overwhelmingly popular. The CWU's poll last week showed most people in Hartlepool back spending over austerity, support renationalising Royal Mail, and like the idea of free broadband.

Yet the election in 2019 was a disaster for Labour. Derek and Jayne rightly reply that Corbyn faced smears and attacks in the media, and from his own party, that no other politician did. That's all true.

But after giving in over Brexit, fudging and toning down his radicalism, Corbyn failed to convince people that Labour would follow through on his promises. Labour's trouble in Hartlepool is deeply rooted in attacks on working class people over decades.

Overcoming it means a major fight to undo all of that. It won't come from Keir Starmer's flag-waving Labour.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



COPS SURROUND marchers defending the right to protest

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Free speech, the Tories and fighting for our rights

BOURNEMOUTH
Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
348 905 7196

HARLOW
Thu 22 Apr, 7.30pm
832-8746-7480

LONDON: ISLINGTON
Thu 22 Apr, 7pm
874-012-7970

YORK & SCARBOROUGH
Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
827-489-7492

BIRMINGHAM
Anger to revolution—what makes people rise up?

Wed 21 Apr, 7pm
281 634 5938

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE

The environment and the myths of overpopulation

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
352 891 2411

BRADFORD

The Syrian Revolution—ten years on

Thu 15 Apr, 7pm
885 9187 7552

BRIGHTON & HOVE

The Paris Commune of 1871—when workers 'stormed heaven'

Thu 22 Apr, 6.30pm
841 2142 3683

BRISTOL

Pamphlet launch—Capitalism and the Politics of Food

Thu 22 Apr, 7.30pm
688 397 748

BURNLEY & PENDLE

George Orwell—hero of the right or left?

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
446 409 5118

CAMBRIDGE
Is there a north/south divide?

Thu 22 Apr, 7.30pm
681 800 4408

CARDIFF

Rosa Luxemburg at 150—why her ideas still matter today

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
630 181 4857

CHESTERFIELD

The Paris Commune of 1871, when workers 'stormed heaven'

Thu 22 Apr, 6.30pm
829 532 877

COVENTRY

Islamophobia and racism—The politics of fear

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
823 945 1917

DEVON & CORNWALL

Book launch—Rebellious Daughters of History with author Judy Cox

Thu 22 Apr, 7.30pm
865 2972 2883

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

Frida Kahlo—revolutionary icon?

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
894 2628 7708

EAST MIDLANDS
Climate change and capitalism—why we need system change

Wed 21 Apr, 7pm
354 874 4790

EDINBURGH

What's behind the coup in Myanmar?

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
431 459 112

GLASGOW

45 years since Rock Against Racism—using culture to fight racism

Thu 22 Apr, 7pm
879 2402 3259

HASTINGS

Capitalism and slavery—the roots of racism

Wed 21 Mar, 7pm
871 7107 4592

HOME COUNTIES

Blair to Starmer—why won't Labour oppose the Tories?

Thu 22 Apr, 6.30pm
872 4922 1957

HUDDERSFIELD

Indian workers and farmers—mass revolt against Modi

Wed 21 Apr, 6.30pm
290 168 1804

KENT
When workers fight for the environment

Thu 22 Apr, 8.15pm
434 623 8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

The Paris Commune of 1871—when workers 'stormed heaven'

Thu 22 Apr, 7pm
992 204 9372

LEEDS

Big Pharma, the Tories and Covid-19—will the vaccine solve the crisis?

Thu 22 Apr, 7pm
881 4770 0676

LIVERPOOL

Can the police be reformed?

Wed 21 Apr, 7pm
493 925 5919

LONDON: HACKNEY

Can Biden put the US back together again?

Thu 22 Apr, 7.30pm
798 534 2585

LONDON: HARINGEY

The environment and the myths of overpopulation

Wed 21 Apr, 7.30pm
459 388 1576

LONDON: NEWHAM
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The end of Communism and the big grey mess of history

The Deutschland TV series explores East Germany's decline and fall. Its writer and creator **Anna Winger** told Yuri Prasad how it combines truth and fiction

THE DEUTSCHLAND '83 TV series first hit British screens in 2016. Few people would have suspected a show built around an East German perspective of the collapse of Communism could be a hit.

But by the end of its run, the spy drama was one of the most popular foreign language programmes in the history of British television.

Part of its appeal was the array of unlikely characters, forced into morally questionable acts, set in a realistic depiction of the East in crisis.

"You're taught a certain myth of history," says Deutschland's writer and creator, Anna Winger.

"It's all told from one point of view or another. But in fact history is a big grey mess.

"The historians and 'winners' of these conflicts have the privilege of defining it. But I think we are always looking at history through the prism of our own experience."

The three series of Deutschland—'83, '86 and the just released '89—all prided themselves on attention to historical detail. But they strove to set the characters free against this backdrop.

Spymaster

Part of the fun of Deutschland is the way lead character Martin Rauch, the reluctant young spy, finds himself in a series of impossible situations.

And his spymaster aunt, Lenora, is always the hidden hand that manipulates him.

"We were not creating a historical document," says Winger. "Deutschland is entertainment first."

"We weren't making a documentary, so we gave ourselves licence to make it fun. But there were certain rules, and one of them was that we never changed the order of historical events."

"We would always plan out a timeline of a series before we decided where to place the characters in it. And so we gave ourselves parameters."

"But we were always looking for the grey areas in history."

"These are areas where we don't



We weren't making a documentary, so it meant we gave ourself licence to make it fun



MARTIN AND his partner Nicole under pressure in the hit series Deutschland '89

actually know what happened, and those bits you can make up."

Winger says this allowed them to place Martin somewhat accidentally at the centre of real world events. One was a near nuclear war between the East and the West during a US-led war game.

Later there was a wrongly-issued order that led to the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Though Martin is the character around which the series is built, it is the menacing Lenora who really shines.

"The thing about Lenora is she was a fully-baked character for me," says Winger. "I wrote her for Maria Schrader, the actor who plays her."

"Right from the beginning of the series I wanted her to be somebody who would be the last one standing—defending her original ideas."

"She was someone who was prepared to fall on her sword."

"I have to acknowledge that there were actually no women in the leadership of the Stasi [East German secret police]."

"But I didn't care about that. In my version the Stasi is full of women."

"There are a lot of women from the former East Germany who are very

powerful in German politics now, such as chancellor Angela Merkel. So there was something about equality in the East that was special, but it didn't play out in the political leadership."

Some of the most powerful moments in Deutschland '89 come as former Stasi officers come to terms with the collapse of their state.

They seek to either reposition themselves in the West, or try and wipe away the guilt of their past crimes.

Wall

Winger is particularly interested in the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall but before the unification of East and West Germany.

"When we look at history now, it always appears that the logical conclusion is the two Germanies reuniting."

"But there were a good few months when that was not clear at all," she says.

"Suddenly our characters' country is gone and it's not clear what they are going to do next."

"And I was really interested to see what that would mean for them. Are they criminals? Are they heroes? Are

they going to be scooped up by other spy agencies because they have such great skills?"

One of the reasons for Deutschland's popularity is the way it rejected the view that East Germans were the "big losers" of history, says Winger.

"I think [people from the former East] are looking at hyper-capitalism and the world we live in now, and are thinking, 'Well, we had some good ideas but they didn't work out.' And that without the East, there's nothing now to balance capitalism."

"So in Deutschland we're talking about the end of socialism, but the end of late-stage capitalism is similar."

"For me, as a social democrat, someone who values equality and inclusion, I think there is a lot to be explored in the people who pursued those ideals."

"I want to know why they went wrong, how and why the East failed."

"Institutionalised socialism as it functioned in the East was deeply problematic because it became a totalitarian regime."

"But it's not true that capitalism is the only answer to that."

The DVD of Deutschland '89 is out on 26 April, £17.99

MUSIC

PROMISES

Floating Points, Pharoah Sanders and the London Symphony Orchestra
Out now on Luka Bop records

IN THESE anxious times many have of us have searched for music that engages us on a more cerebral level than the average three minute pop song.

Promises is a collaboration between one of the last of John Coltrane's disciples, saxophonist Pharoah Sanders and the British musician, DJ and producer Floating Points.

Together with the London



Saxophonist Pharoah Sanders

Symphony Orchestra they have produced a series of pieces.

These invite us to listen closely and attentively—and they take us far away from the fears of our era.

If you are looking for the fast paced and over-blowing sound of Pharoah Sanders in his 1970s prime, you've come to the wrong place.

Instead Sanders is here in deeply contemplative mode, his notes weaving in and out of Floating Points' soundscapes. The orchestral backing adds amazing depth to the pieces and might remind you of Alice Coltrane at her most spiritual.

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- The Hammer and the Anvil**
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FIFTY years ago another **Kill The Bill** movement led to strikes and protests against repressive Tory legislation that restricted workers' rights.

This movement took place in a time when working class organisation was far stronger than today.

Unions wielded more power against the bosses, even bringing down a government in 1974. And rank and file workers would often strike against the wishes of cowardly union bureaucrats.

Once again, the Tories want to clamp down on the movements, this time with their protest-smashing police bill. While the context is different to the 1970s, we can still learn from that spirit of militancy.

Back then, a Tory government under Edward Heath came to office in 1970 looking to limit the strength of the working class. They were particularly worried about "wildcat" strikes led from the shopfloor. So Heath introduced the Industrial Relations Act 1971 to restrict workers' power.

It forced unions to accept legal restraints through registration with a government body. Bodies not registered—whether a workers' committee or union—would be subject to penalties if it called for action.

This meant strikes without official union backing would be banned.

The National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) was established to grant injunctions to prevent unofficial strikes.

Outrage

Prior to the Heath government, Harold Wilson's Labour had also attempted to limit the power of unions. This led to outrage and mass strikes between 1969 to 1970.

The ruling class were desperate to put a stop to the militancy.

Socialist Worker reported in 1971, "The Tories are on the attack because of the newfound strength of workers."

Dave Sherry is a retired trade unionist who joined the International Socialists, the forerunner to the Socialist Workers Party, in 1972.

"What the Labour government and the Tories did was politicise workers," he said.

"It wasn't because of militant trade union leaders that workers were always on strike, but good workplace organisation.

"They'd go on strike before officials negotiated a rotten deal. They don't do that now. It's the job of socialists to learn from that and remember what we have been through in the last 50 years."



BATTLE TO KILL THE BILL IN 1971

In 1971, workers fought against an authoritarian Tory law, chanting, 'Kill The Bill'. Isabel Ringrose argues we need the same spirit of militancy to kill the Tory police bill today



Socialist Worker says, 'Kill The Bill'

The movement against the bill wasn't straight forward. Rank and file workers had to fight union leaders in order to attack the proposed law, and often acted alone when they didn't listen.

In early 1971 the TUC union federation began to soften its opposition to the anti-union laws.

Union leaders feared workers taking action on their own, as it would make

“Trade unions were far more powerful force in society in the 1970s

their role unnecessary. Socialist Worker concluded, "Rank and file organisation is necessary if there is to be a united fight against the anti-union offensive."

It's this spirit of revolt from below that we can take into our battle against the police bill.

The fight to kill it can be successful if we rely on our strength in the streets and ignore those in official positions who tell us to curtail our radicalism.

Due to pressure from below on 12 January 1971 hundreds

of thousands of workers took part in a one-day strike called by the TUC.

In Coventry more than 40,000 went on strike. And in Merseyside 50,000 went on strike, including almost all dock workers. Socialist Worker reported, "The mood of determination to kill the bill was keener than ever."

"The TUC can only be forced to take really decisive action if hundreds of thousands of more workers can be mobilised."

A rally was also called by the TUC at the end of February to mark the end of its "feeble" campaign against the bill. Over 140,000 trade unionists took to the streets of London

But workers again clashed with union leaders. On 1 March 1971 workers across Britain went out on strike as part of an unofficial day of protest against the bill.

Around 250,000 workers struck in London and across Britain some 1.5 million downed tools, including postal workers.

Yet at the TUC conference in March 1971 leaders refused to make it a condition of TUC membership that unions should not cooperate with the new anti-union laws.

So again, workers acted alone. In July 1971 Glasgow workers occupied the UCS shipyards.

Dave said this "turned the tide".

"More militant action flowed from the occupation," he explained. "It provoked a huge spread and a series of explosions of struggle when the law had just come in. There were sit-ins, strikes and demos."

"The kill the bill movement didn't kill off the act under the Tories, but folk defied it."

"The anger quickly spread to those seen as white collar workers, not just the vanguard section of the working class."

IT WASN'T until September 1971, after the bill became law, that the TUC shifted to "instruct" rather than "advise" members not to register under the Act.

In 1972 the Act met its match against dock workers who organised action in defiance of union leaders.

The mass strikes that followed were the pinnacle of a two-year battle over the right to strike and the inaction of union leaders.

By January, 300,000 miners had come out on national strike. And around 25,000 engineering workers in Manchester occupied 30 factories from March to May.

Dock workers in Liverpool picketed at new container depots in a fight to defend their jobs.

This went against the Act and bosses made complaints to the NIRC to shut down the pickets. The NIRC also threatened three London dockers with jail for picketing and refusing to handle goods. Dockers met three days

later on 15 June and voted to strike until all proceedings were dropped.

This led to the charges being dropped, sparking an increase in confidence.

By July the Midland Cold Storage company applied to the NIRC to shut down a picket at its east London depot.

When the pickets continued, five dockers were arrested on Friday 21 July and sent to Pentonville prison.

As a result every docker in Britain walked out on an unofficial strike and mass picketing outside the prison was held.

Electricians struck that night. On the Saturday, to ensure the release of the Pentonville Five, dockers hit the national newspapers. They marched down Fleet Street in central London shouting and leafleting printers to join.

From Monday 24 to Friday 28 July national daily newspapers and London, Manchester and Liverpool evening papers were not published.

ALL major engineering firms struck in Sheffield, where 3,000 workers marched to demand the TUC called action.

A demonstration of up to 30,000 workers assembled at Tower Hill in London on Tuesday 25 July and marched to Pentonville. And some 250,000 workers unofficially struck.

The dockers were released five days later on Wednesday 26 July, followed by an official dockers' strike that continued for three weeks.

"This period was another turning point," Dave said. "There was immediate solidarity in breach of the law and the Tories couldn't do anything about it."

"The mass rank and file was so big that the TUC had to call a one-day general strike the following Monday."

"The 1970s was the biggest thing that happened to the British working class since the end of the First World War."

The strikes showed the ability that workers' solidarity can have—despite unofficial action being banned.

"The organised working class was bigger then, now it is weaker," Dave explained.

"We have a very different working class now, it is more widespread. There are more women in the movement and



WORKERS demand the TUC union federation opposes the bill at a rally in Trafalgar Square in 1970 (top) **On the march between Tower Hill and Hyde Park in London** (above)

anti-racism has also pulled people in. That's made a huge difference. We need to build the organised working class."

The main focus of resistance is presently on the streets, rather than in workplaces.

But workers can be drawn into the current Kill The Bill movement and its militancy can help initiate new rank and file organisations.

This happened with the Yellow Vests in France.

A movement that began on the streets, inspired rank and file workers to organise militant strikes, with commentators talking about a "yellow vestisation" of the unions.

The fight against the Industrial Relations Act proves that militant resistance works.

And class struggle is the key to it.



Should we be worried about the AstraZeneca vaccine?

Dr Kambiz Boomla says the vaccine is safe—but commercial interests are not

FEARS ABOUT blood clotting occurring after the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccination has led countries such as Germany and Canada to restrict this vaccine's use.

The NHS is correct to continue using it. But the fact that expensive alternatives are having to be bought from pharmaceutical companies does highlight how commercial interests could stand in the way of making sure everyone has access to safe medicine.

The problem is a rare blood clot affecting the brain called Cerebral Venous Sinus Thrombosis. The blood clotting is unusual, seemingly caused by low numbers of platelets in the blood, which are part of the body's blood clotting control mechanisms.

This raises the question of what the balance of risk and benefit of the vaccine is.

Clear and transparent advice has now been issued by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) that the vaccine is safe and should continue to be used.

There have been 169 cases across Europe out of 34 million doses given, and in Britain, there have been 79 cases and 19 deaths after 20 million doses given.

All ages and sexes have been affected with three deaths under age 30. This gives a risk of about four in one million developing a blood clot and one in a million dying.

It's not been possible for scientists to tell if any age group or sex is more affected as the numbers are so low.

Low

The balance of risk and benefit does vary according to your age. For people in their 60s, the risk of serious harm from the vaccine is vanishingly low at 0.2 cases per 100,000 people vaccinated.

The benefit for over 60s is 410 intensive care admissions avoided.

But for younger age groups

the risk to benefit ratio is different. There's still a very low risk at one case per 100,000 people vaccinated.

Because younger people are less likely to be seriously ill with Covid-19, the benefits are much lower.

Therefore, the NHS is proposing to give the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine and not the AstraZeneca vaccine to those under 30.

It's important to stress that these risks are very low. A young person's chance of dying in an road accident is one in 100,000 over 16 weeks, very similar to the risk from the vaccine.

System

What this has highlighted is that the NHS has a good drug surveillance system. It was developed after the thalidomide disaster. Pregnant people were prescribed this drug as an anti-sickness medication but it caused birth deformities that went unnoticed for a long time.

The system put in place afterwards is what spotted the serious possible side effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine that were too rare to be discovered in the early trials. There has since been transparency in reporting these side effects to the public.

This contrasts starkly with the lack of transparency of the commercial contracts in all other aspects of the government's handling of the Covid-19 crisis.

Test and trace and protective PPE equipment procurement saw cronyism and putting profits before safety. They've contributed to Britain having one of the highest Covid-19 death rates in the world.

What this has highlighted is that the NHS has good drug surveillance

The AstraZeneca vaccine is one of the few low-cost vaccines available in the world, costing £2.19 a dose.

Powerful

There are powerful commercial interests who would want to maintain the super profits made by Pfizer, Moderna, and others, which cost up to ten times as much. Those medical companies have much to gain from a loss of confidence in AstraZeneca.

Most countries in the world do not have the cold chains of super-deep freezers that are required for messenger RNA vaccines.

But this episode also demonstrates how commercial interests stand in the way of dealing with worldwide vaccine shortages.

All countries need to be free to produce a variety of vaccines at low cost in quantity without facing legal actions for breaching patent laws.

READ MORE

● **Glorious Summer—class struggle in Britain, 1972** by Ralph Darlington and Dave Lydon £16.80

● **In the Thick of Workers' Struggle. Volume 2, Tony Cliff's Selected Writings** by Tony Cliff £15.00

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Deliveroo strikers don't let bosses ride over them

DELIVEROO RIDERS in many parts of Britain struck and rallied last Wednesday demanding workers' rights, enhanced safety and an end to poverty pay.

The action was timed to coincide with the date that Deliveroo started public trading on the stock market.

In London striking riders assembled at Shoreditch High Street station in their company jackets.

They moved off in convoy, bicycles at the front and scooters behind, and took a long route to the bosses' headquarters.

Around 300 went to Goldman Sachs, Deliveroo's stock market flotation partners. They chanted, "Shame on you, shame on Roo."

And then, smoke flares billowing, the angry riders went to the stock exchange.

"I'm delivering food, but then I'm using a foodbank," rider Surjit told Socialist Worker.

"There's been so much work delivering food during the pandemic and people probably think we're coining it in. But it's Deliveroo that



DELIVEROO STRIKERS took to the streets of London last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

makes the money, not us."

The strikers are members of the IWGB union. The union says that its exposure of Deliveroo's employment practices contributed to the disastrous launch of the firm on the stock market last week.

Protests also took place in York, Sheffield, Reading

and Wolverhampton—and in other countries.

York Deliveroo rider Ethan Bradley told The Big Issue magazine, "We need basic security of earnings. I've had many weeks when I've lost sleep at night because I don't know how much I'm going to make the following week

because the pandemic means demand goes up and down.

"I don't know if I'm going to be able to make the rent next week, or pay the bills. Many riders have family, have dependents and have kids to feed. This would mean so much to them."

Many riders say they are

paid less than the minimum wage when waiting time between orders is taken into account.

This means they can be left standing outside in all weathers for hours unpaid.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism analysed thousands of invoices from more than 300 riders over the past year.

It showed that one in three made on average less than £8.72, the national minimum wage for over 25s, for their overall time per session in the app.

Cyclist

Some earned even less. A cyclist in Yorkshire was logged in for 180 hours and was paid the equivalent of £2 per hour.

This is perfectly legal because riders are treated by Deliveroo as being self-employed.

Deliveroo riders are taking heart from a recent court decision that Uber drivers are workers, not self-employed.

Uber drivers should now be entitled to minimum national wage rates and the entire time drivers are logged

on and available for work should be taken into account when calculating overall pay.

This is what Deliveroo riders want. They also want an end to arbitrary sackings.

The app often fires riders giving them little explanation for why, meaning that they could lose a whole income source overnight.

Surjit added, "If I look around the demonstration today, I would say two-thirds of the people here, maybe three-quarters, are people of colour."

"I'm convinced there's discrimination and favouritism taking place at Deliveroo. It all needs sorting and the way we're going to win is to make the IWGB bigger and keep striking."

It's great to see workers who are often written off as "unorganisable" taking action. The last year has also underlined how "precarious" workers are central to how the economy works.

Other unions should support the campaign and help the riders inflict a defeat on a giant company.

Support the strike fund at ridersroovolt.com/donate/

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Financial institutions are funding climate destruction

Extinction Rebellion targeted banks last week as part of a campaign against their funding for fossil fuels. Sam Ord looks at global banks' climate failures

GLOBAL banks' promises of turning green are overshadowed by their £2.77 trillion financing of the fossil fuel industry since 2016.

The world's biggest 60 banks have provided £2.8 trillion of financing for fossil fuel companies since the Paris climate deal in 2016.

Banks' funding of fossil fuel companies still rose 10 percent last year, despite a dip of 9 percent in overall financing since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

Big banks are attracted to the profits fossil fuels create, especially because essential services like food and transport rely on a constant supply of nonreusable fuel.

The Rainforest Action Network found that banking company BNP Paribas increased funding to fossil fuel companies by 41 percent last year.

It currently invests £29.8 billion in fossil fuels despite signing the United Nations (UN) Collective Commitment to Climate Action that requires signatories to take decisive action immediately after signing.

Fossil fuel companies rely on loans from banks to fund their projects.

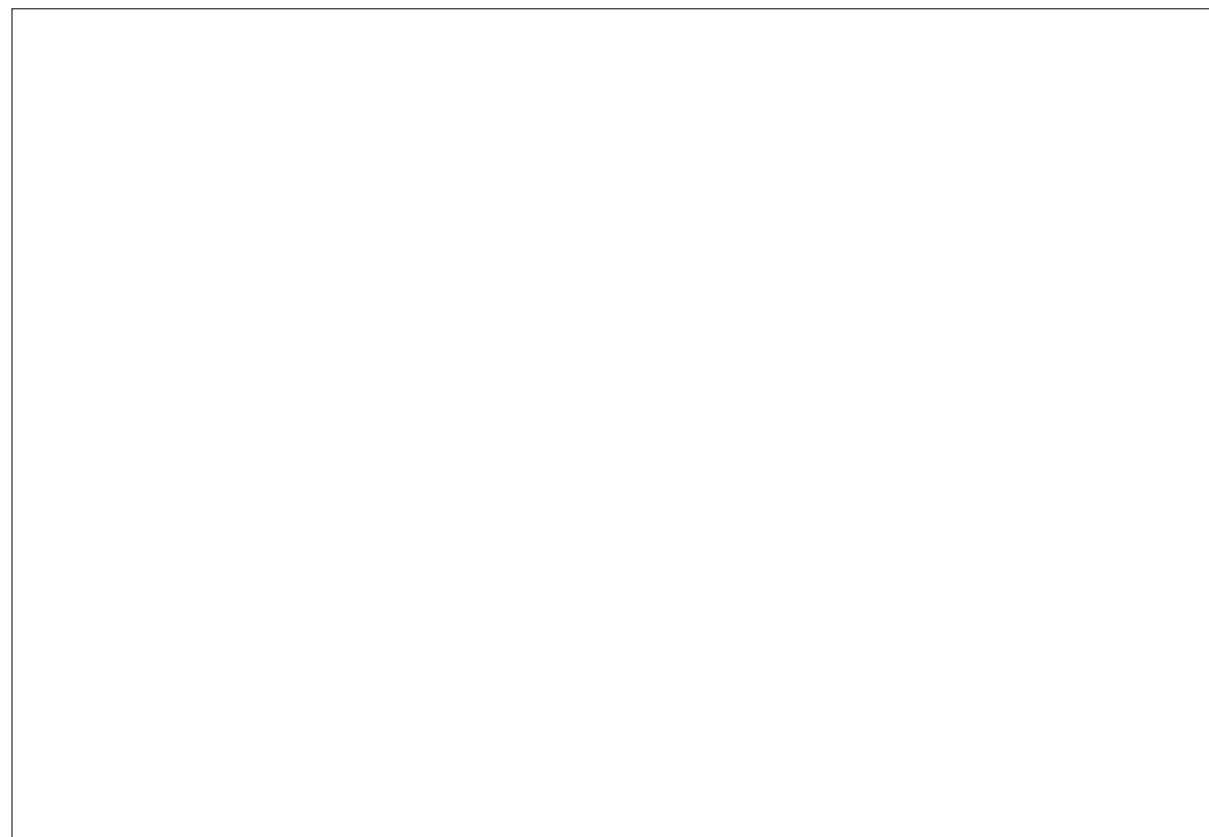
"Banks provide the financial oxygen that allows the fossil fuel industry to breathe," said Mark Campanale at thinktank Carbon Tracker

To win investment they must prove they have fuel reserves to extract. This leads to exploitative technologies being advanced.

Some banks have policies that block finance for coal, the dirtiest fossil fuel.

But almost two-thirds of funding is for oil and gas companies.

These technologies include fracking—drilling into the earth to



XR PROTESTERS sprayed 'fossil fools' on the Bank of England on 1 April

shoot high-pressure water at rock to release gas—and research into Arctic oil and gas reservoirs.

And it includes tar sands, one of the most carbon-intensive fuels. Producing it releases three times as much greenhouse gas pollution as crude oil does.

These methods have resulted in global temperatures rising by one degree since pre-industrial levels.

We urgently need a green

transformation of our energy sector that goes further than divestment and nationalisation.

One bank's divestment would just open a space for another financier to take their space and continue profiting from exploiting the planet.

Richard Brooks, director of NGO Stand, described banks' claims to combat the climate crisis as like "gorging on doughnuts and then eating an apple afterwards."

"We certainly can't rely on banks or the private sector to lead us into climate safety and lead us toward emissions reductions."

Genuinely tackling the climate crisis would mean writing off billions of pounds of banks' investments in future fossil fuel projects.

Action to halt climate crisis is inextricably linked to the fight against the financial institutions that profit from the fossil fuel economy.

'Someone must raise alarm'

BARCLAYS IS the largest financier of fossil fuels in Europe despite its pledge to become net zero or carbon neutral by 2050.

In 2020 the bank invested £20 billion in fossil fuels, taking its total investment since 2016 to £105 billion.

Barclays funded the Trans Mountain pipeline, which carries oil across indigenous land in Canada.

Extinction Rebellion has targeted the bank.

A group of seven activists smashed Barclays

headquarters' windows in Canary Wharf, London last week.

Their actions are part of the "Money Rebellion" that seeks to confront the current priorities of this economic system.

Sophie Cowen, a campaigner from London, said, "You may dislike our action today but I ask you to compare a crack

in a window to funding wildfires and flooded homes.

"We took action today because someone needs to raise the alarm, because broken windows are better than broken futures."



Pipeline protest

Poor suffer as rich profit

BANKS ARE complicit in spoiling of the environment on indigenous lands in the US. The bank JPMorgan Chase is the largest financier of fossil fuels globally.

It poured out finance of £37 billion last year, taking its total funding to £231 billion since 2016.

These investments fuelled the Dakota Access Pipeline construction, which threatens indigenous groups' sacred sites and water supplies.

Protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe who sought to halt construction were

met with police brutality. But banks kept investing.

And JPMorgan Chase isn't unique. Banks' fossil fuel monopolies are measures often described as "environmental colonisation" in the pursuit of profit.

People in the global South have been facing environmental disaster for years. And it's always the poor who are hit the hardest by environmental disaster.

The environmental and ecological breakdown is leading to the displacement of hundreds of millions of people.

Bankers back the polluters

AROUND 77 percent of board members at seven major US banks have ties to organisations destroying the climate.

This includes climate denying lobbyists and fossil fuel companies, despite US banks agreeing to help fight the climate crisis.

All ten directors for the biggest fossil fuel financier, JPMorgan Chase, are tied to firms contributing to the climate crisis.

Investigative environmentalist platform DeSmog analysed directors at Britain's biggest banks, including Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds, Standard Chartered and Natwest.

It concluded that almost one-quarter of the directors have a current or past connection to the fossil fuel industry.

Funds for a dirty project

THE CERREJON coal mine is the largest in Latin America.

Its expansion over the last five decades has led to the destruction of whole villages populated by local indigenous and Afro-Colombian people.

The diversion of water to the mine has combined with a ten-year drought in the region. The combination is said to have left 37,000 indigenous children malnourished and caused at least 5,000 deaths from starvation. Some estimates put the toll at 14,000.

In 2013 Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group and NatWest Group provided loans totalling over £8 billion for the mine. Banks have continued to finance its owners— Anglo American, BHP Group and Glencore.

Refugees to be forced back to the Napier camp

The Home Office is sending asylum seekers back to the condemned camp, reports Isabel Ringrose

THE HOME Office is moving asylum seekers back into Napier Barracks in Kent. This is despite a number of legal challenges and damning reports on the accommodation's suitability to hold refugees long term.

All refugees had been moved out of the site and campaigners hoped the doors would be shut for good.

But now those who have recently arrived in Britain or are being kept in hotels have received a letter from the Home Office telling them they'd be moved by last Friday.

The letter said, "It is anticipated you will reside at Napier for between 60 and 90 days." Hundreds could be housed on the site.

Around half of the 400 latest residents contracted coronavirus due to conditions. A similar style camp in Penally, west Wales, was closed down last month after an inspection.

One refugee who was forced into Napier and contracted the virus told Socialist Worker the Home Office is trying to show "they don't want asylum seekers here".

"It's clear that putting asylum seekers there is a political decision. They are aware of what they're doing," he said.

He added that it's "always easier to blame foreigners" when things go wrong.

Blame

"In Napier we complained to the camp manager, but he said we didn't wear masks or socially distance. It's always easier to put blame on us, rather than criticise the system that put 28 people in one room."

The refugee added that the government has "spent too much time and money spreading misinformation in society".

"They always say that we are invaders, illegal, criminals and rapists," he said. "But it's not the case."

"Put yourself in the shoes of people who are seeking asylum. Why would someone choose to leave their own country, friends and family?

BACK STORY

Inspectors condemned conditions at the Napier former army barracks that are now housing refugees

● Around half of the 400 asylum seekers staying there contracted Covid-19 due to poor conditions

● Refugees reported that help wasn't given to residents who were suffering from mental distress

● Inspectors found the refugees were not given privacy or control over their day, and that they weren't told what would happen to them

"People are fleeing persecution. It's not possible for them to collect a passport or go to an embassy."

The news of new arrivals at Napier Barracks comes after home secretary Priti Patel announced there would be an overhaul of Britain's asylum system.

This will see refugees who travel through "illegal" ways immediately deported.

The refugee added, "Seeking asylum is not a privilege. Even if the army camps are going to be closed the asylum system is broken."

"We need a sympathetic home office that sees us as humans, not invaders."

After a fire broke out in Napier in January following a protest, Patel criticised refugees for "wasting taxpayers' money".

"If they are worried about taxpayers' money then give asylum seekers the right to work," the refugee argued. "Then we can pay our own taxes."

"I read that prince Philip was a refugee. So it's a class problem."

"He was from the top so he was welcome here."



On other pages...

Billionaires cashing in during the pandemic >>> Page 2

HEALTH WORKERS who've worked through the pandemic are being insulted by low pay offers

Scottish health workers furious at union backing for 4 percent pay offer

by YURI PRASAD

HEALTH WORKERS in Scotland are furious that their Unison union is recommending they accept the Holyrood government's offer of a paltry 4 percent pay rise.

Unison, the largest health service union, says it will be putting the offer to ballot among its 60,000 members in the Scottish NHS.

It will tell them it is the best that can be achieved.

"I'm shocked and really upset about this," Linda Kerr, a mental health nurse in Glasgow, told Socialist Worker.

"For the union that I've paid dues to for nine years to do this is incredible."

"I'm appalled."

Unison has spent recent months explaining that its demand for "at least" £2,000 extra a year for all NHS staff is "moderate"—especially when compared to other unions and pay campaigners seeking far more.

Now it appears that the union is prepared to settle for the

equivalent of just £14 extra a week for a qualified nurse.

"I work with colleagues who regularly do between eight and 20 hours of overtime bank shifts every week," said Linda.

"That's not so they can go on fancy holidays, it's so they can pay the bills."

"And all the way through the pandemic hardly any of us have been able to take our breaks because so many staff have been off sick."

"That 4 percent we've been offered doesn't even pay for the free extra work that has been taken from us over the last year."

Implications

Unison's decision to recommend acceptance of the offer in Scotland has grave implications for health workers elsewhere across Britain.

It means that if the NHS Pay Review Body recommends a similar 4 percent rise, the union will likely recommend acceptance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland too.

But not all health unions are rushing to endorse the Scottish offer.

The nurses' RCN union has issued its members with a recommendation to reject.

It has already put aside millions of pounds while balloting into a "strike fund" and has been busy preparing for possible action.

The GMB union says it also recommends rejection. Both unions understand there is deep anger among NHS workers.

It is possible for pay to act as a lightning rod for issues such as overwork, huge staff shortages, management bullying and pandemic safety.

That's why it is vital that activists in all unions continue to push for a 15 percent pay rise.

More pay protests, meetings and campaigns in hospitals across Britain can focus that anger.

They can be a springboard to push back at both the Tory and Scottish National Party governments—and the failing union leaders.

"This is not just a Scottish issue," said Linda. "But what happens here will have an effect everywhere."

She is absolutely right.

BUS DRIVERS

Escalate bus fight in London, Manchester

by SAM ORD

BUS DRIVERS at Go North West in Manchester are battling on against a brutal employer assault.

Around 400 workers began an all-out on 28 February to stop a fire and rehire attack on pay and conditions.

Bosses are imposing new contracts to work longer hours on the same pay, costing them lost wages of up to £2,500 a year.

The alternative is to be sacked.

It's an important battle not just for the workers themselves but also for many more who are watching the outcome.

Fire

Last week strikers were joined by members of the FBU firefighters' union who had come to show their support for dousing bosses' fire and rehire plans.

In the seventh week of strikes, workers remain determined to win.

But managers are also determined. Escalation is necessary.

There could, for example,



STANDING FIRM in Manchester

PICTURE: UNITE NORTH WEST

be pickets of depots where scab services are being run by private operators.

Unite north west regional secretary Ritchie James said recently, "Unite has tried to resolve this dispute through negotiations and put forward over £1.3 million of savings proposals.

"But Go North West deemed this insufficient."

Instead of offering cuts Unite has to spread the fight.

Meanwhile, in west and south London bus drivers

for outsourced bus operating company RATP on the London United fleet have been striking over attacks on pay and conditions.

Two weeks ago the Stamford Brook and Hounslow Heath garages, voted to join the strike meaning all seven of London United's garages are on strike.

The dispute is over bosses' plans to cut pay despite RATP having an annual turnover of over £4.3 billion.

London United drivers

will continue to strike every Wednesday.

Alongside this over 4,000 drivers for bus operator Metroline in London have voted for strikes over plans to introduce a "remote sign on" system.

This means drivers do not report to a depot, but start work elsewhere, such as a bus stop. The system raises concerns over conditions and increased driving hours.

Support for Manchester strike via bit.ly/GNWstrike

BRITISH GAS

Victims of fire and rehire

MANY BRITISH Gas workers have expressed their anger and sadness after being sacked this week.

Around 7,000 GMB union members took to picket lines for more than 40 days this year after parent company Centrica planned to fire and rehire the workforce.

Workers were then given a final ultimatum that if they didn't sign up for a new contract they would be fired on 14 April.

But a significant number have refused to sign.

Many, seeing no alternative, have decided to leave the company.

One British Gas worker wrote on Twitter, "Just had my last working day at British Gas after 22 years and my van goes back tomorrow.

"I'm doing my best to remain professional for my customers. Looks like it's too

late for me but we all need to keep fighting to change the law on fire and rehire."

Photos of rows of British Gas vans that were taken away from workers have circulated on social media showing just how many workers will now be without a job.

The GMB called a strike for this Wednesday, 14 April. It says further strikes will be called.

But the union has made no statements about its members who have been forced to quit their jobs.

The GMB national leaders have repeatedly failed to escalate action to break the ruthless bosses' assault.

Meanwhile other unions have looked on and done nothing effective.

If union leaders don't now challenge fire and rehire, it will be used by other firms.

EXTINCTION REBELLION

THE TRIAL began on Monday of seven people, including two Extinction Rebellion co-founders, charged with £25,000 of criminal damage at Shell's London headquarters.

During the protest two years ago activists poured fake oil, glued themselves to the windows and blocked the doors.

Six of the defendants are pleading not guilty.

The case was expected to take two weeks.

More than 900 XR rebels have been convicted for their actions since April 2019.

●Tweet support to the defendants at @XRebellionUK and @shell_knows

RAIL AND TUBE WORKERS

CONDUCTORS AND ticket inspectors for train operating company Abellio ScotRail are stepping up their battle over extra payments for rest day working.

Conductors in the RMT union have been striking each Sunday since 28 March. Last week ticket inspectors voted to join the action.

■TUBE DRIVERS who are RMT members at Queens Park depot have voted by 99 percent for strikes.

They are fighting a new work schedule that cuts 11 jobs.

●Tweet solidarity messages to @BakerlooRMT and @RMTLondon

GOODLORD

Goodlord fights bad lord

GOODLORD strikers in London are upbeat after over a month of a continuous and indefinite strike against bosses' fire and rehire plans.

Unite union members in the referencing department of the company, which provides estate agents and landlords with software, walked out at the beginning of March.

Bosses' fire and rehire plan will see the 20 workers lose up to £6,000 annually, plunging them below the London Living Wage.

Yet Goodlord is signed up to the Living Wage Foundation.

The company is trying to justify the cuts by claiming that, as staff are working remotely, they don't need to live in London. Striker Kathleen told Socialist Worker, "We want our salaries back. I want to live where I'm employed—not be pushed out of my home."

Kathleen explained that the referencing department of the company are "seen differently". "Our department used a temp agency to hire zero hour contract employees, so people were in and out," she said.

"More of us have now been put on fixed term contracts but Goodlord have refused to take us seriously."

Tahmid, another striker, told Socialist Worker. "I'm striking about the whole situation—the salary cut is the last straw.

On the picket last Thursday strikers and their supporters chanted, "When I say Goodlord, you say bad lord."

●A picket is planned at Goodlord headquarters on Heneage Street, London, E1 5LJ on Friday 16 April at 11.30am. Messages of support to @unitelondonitc on Twitter

●For an extended story go to bit.ly/GoodlordSW

SCOTTISH LECTURERS

Resistance at FE colleges

COLLEGE lecturers across Scotland plan a further two-day strike in a continuing dispute over the replacement of lecturers with instructors on lower pay and with worse conditions.

The EIS-Fela union has called action on Tuesday and Wednesday next week.

The following week it is escalating the strikes to three days a week.

Lecturers have responded strongly to the call for strikes because they know this is a crucial battle. Many colleges have already signalled they want to go ahead with replacing lecturers.

The strikes have the potential to embarrass the Scottish National Party in the run-up to the 6 May elections. It's good the EIS is escalating the action, and it must continue to do so—if necessary to an all-out strike.

●Send messages of solidarity to dongluckstein@gmail.com

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Fightback in Thurrock

REFUSE WORKERS, highway maintenance workers and street cleaners working for Thurrock council in Essex began a three-week strike on Tuesday.

It kicked off with a huge picket line.

The Tory council wants to cut most workers' pay from £24,800 a year to around £23,800. Drivers face even bigger cuts.

Senior council officers who spent the past year working from home continue to receive bumper salaries.

Workers in the Unite union have been out leafleting in advance of the action explaining the strike to local residents. They received a warm response.

●Donations to Unite 1/1152, sort code 60-83-01, account 20216557. Messages of solidarity to willie.howard@unitetheunion.org Follow Justice For Refuse Workers & Cleansers on Facebook

ROUND-UP

■WORKERS AT United Colleges Group have voted overwhelmingly for strikes to defend their conditions.

The UCU union members in London are fighting imposed changes to their contracts that increase workloads.

Some 99 percent of union members who voted backed strikes, and 100 percent supported action short of a strike.

Bosses imposed changes at the start of the autumn term last year that removed timetabled non-teaching hours for lecturers. The changes have added an extra hour of teaching a week to timetables and have seen hourly-paid staff lose money.

The union is set to restart negotiations with bosses after the Easter break. It would be in a stronger position if it named strike dates in advance to increase the pressure on management.

■UCU UNION members at Liverpool university have delivered their highest ever turnout in a strike ballot to save jobs. Some 84 percent

of union members who voted supported strikes and 90 percent backed action short of a strike. The turnout was 60 percent.

The union branch said the turnout figure sent an "emphatic message" that workers are prepared to fight back.

Bosses want to make 47 staff redundant in the Health and Life Sciences department.

Branch president Anthony O'Hanlon said the attack has caused "huge anger".

"To attack jobs in that faculty during a pandemic is despicable," he said

■MAINTENANCE workers at housing charity St Mungo's are set to begin an indefinite strike from Thursday of next week over "appalling treatment" by senior management.

The strike was called after workers' complaints against management were dismissed.

The Unite union says that a workplace representative is being unfairly subjected to disciplinary proceedings due to raising grievances.

JOIN ACTION TO KILL POLICE BILL

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE SECOND major Kill the Bill day of action on Saturday should be a day of anger, resistance and defiance.

The Tories' Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will give police more draconian powers, including the ability to shut down and limit protests.

In the wake of Extinction Rebellion and Black Lives Matter protests, home secretary Priti Patel has sought to crack down on radical and effective demonstrations.

Patel knows the power protests have, and wants to ban opposition that could hurt the Tories.

The bill will also hit Travellers, Gypsies and Roma people.

Unite

The latest round of Tory repression has seen a multitude of groups, from anti-racists to climate activists and trans rights groups, unite on the streets.

Last Friday, Saturday and Sunday protesters demonstrated in areas including Manchester, Brighton,



THE NEW Tory police bill, which would trample on our rights, has sparked angry protests

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Bristol, Norwich, Barnstaple, Cambridge, Malvern, Falmouth, Lancaster, Swansea, Cardiff and Worcester.

In Bristol, which has been at the centre of clashes with police, a protester was arrested "on suspicion of

conspiracy to commit public nuisance".

Protesters gathered for the seventh Kill the Bill demonstration and marched through the city.

It followed news that Avon and Somerset Police chief Andy Marsh will quit in the

summer following his force's heavy handling of the bill riots.

Riot cops have violently attacked protesters in recent weeks.

Yet Marsh has also been criticised for "failing to intervene" during Black Lives

Matter protests last summer where people dumped a statue of slaver Edward Colston in the docks.

Under the new bill, attacking a statue can lead to a ten year prison sentence—longer than many sentences for sexual assault or rape.

Last Saturday in Manchester protesters gathered in St Peter's Square chanting, "Kill the Bill" and, "Tories out."

Protesters also held placards reading, "Defend Roma rights."

Speakers included Stand Up to Racism, Extinction Rebellion and a rep from the Unison union.

Radicalism

It's vital more workers and union banners are out next Saturday. The radicalism from the streets needs to feed into the trade union movement.

The way to beat the bill is to bring the fight to the workplaces. But this should not detract from the radicalism of the street movement.

Saturday's protests will clash with the official silence for the Duke of Edinburgh.

It's important protesters aren't pulled into the elite's ramped up patriotism at a time when resistance against the Tories is so militant and necessary.

More online

'We'll unite to kill Tory bill'
bit.ly/ActivistsUnite

UNITED STATES

Furious protests after cops kill black man Daunte Wright near Minneapolis

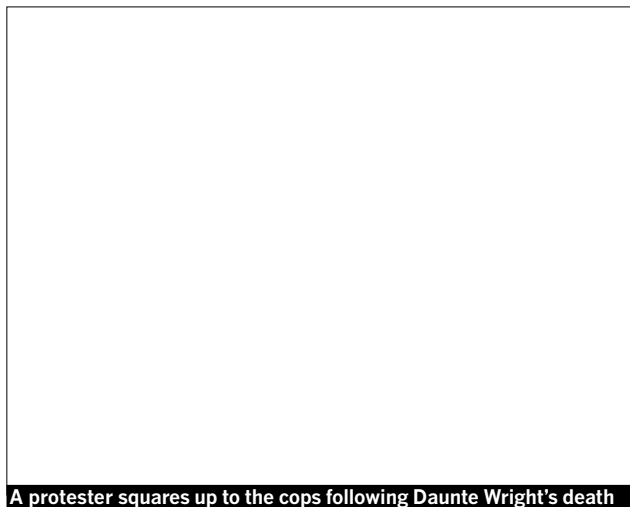
by SOPHIE SQUIRE

PROTESTERS raged on the streets of Brooklyn Center just outside Minneapolis on Sunday after cops murdered a black man.

George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis 11 months ago. His death sparked a new wave of Black Lives Matter protests.

Daunte Wright was shot by police while driving his car last Sunday. He fatally crashed into another vehicle.

An angry crowd gathered at the place



A protester squares up to the cops following Daunte Wright's death

where Wright died, tore down police tape and demanded cops provide them with answers.

Police replied with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Wright's mother, Katie Wright, told angry protesters that police had pulled him over for having air fresheners dangling from his rear view mirror.

Katie had heard the altercation on her phone.

"I heard scuffling, and I heard police officers say, 'Daunte, don't run,'" she said.

The call then ended, and she said that when

she dialled back, her son's girlfriend answered and said he was dead in the driver's seat.

Despite police repression, protesters defied repeated orders to disperse and chanted, "Black Lives Matter".

Tensions are high across the US, as the trial of Derek Chauvin, the police officer who killed George Floyd, continues.

The murder of Wright, ten miles away from where Floyd was killed, shows that it's still business as usual for the racist US police force.

And it will take more than a new Democratic president to quell the anger in society.

In his election campaign, Joe Biden promised that his time in office would mean a break from the racism of former president Donald Trump.

But Biden, who has opposed calls to defund the police, is providing no solution to racist police brutality.

Stand Up To Racism plans a week of action to mark a year after George Floyd's death. Go to [Stand Up To Racism](https://StandUpToRacism.org) on Facebook